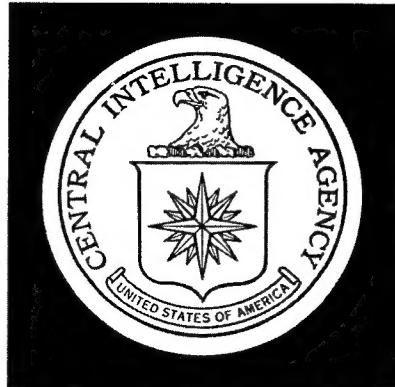


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MEMORANDUM

DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

The Situation in Vietnam

State Dept. review completed

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

Analysis of aerial photography [redacted] has revealed 18 MIG-21 fighters at Hanoi's Phuc Yen Airfield. Previous US estimates had credited the North Vietnamese Air Force with only six MIG-21s remaining after nine were lost in early January.

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Nearly 3,000 tons of rice have been seized and 466 Communist troops have been killed since Operation CEDAR FALLS began on 7 January (Para. 1). Two small engagements, were reported in Operation BYRD 110 miles northeast of Saigon (Para. 2). Updated figures show 47 Communists killed as a result of an attack on a South Vietnamese district headquarters on 15 January (Para. 3). Fifty-seven Viet Cong were reported killed by the South Vietnamese 32nd Ranger Battalion in the delta province of Kien Hoa (Para. 4). A Viet Cong major, captured during Operation CEDAR FALLS, stated that 200 men in his unit were killed by a B-52 raid in January 1967 (Para. 5).

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[redacted] Viet Cong difficulties with personnel, supplies, and health in Phu Yen and Thua Thien provinces are revealed in captured documents (Paras. 7-12).

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II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: Premier Ky is scheduled to arrive in Australia on 18 January to begin his good-will tour amid much controversy there (Paras. 1-4). [redacted]

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[redacted] The government announced its intention to limit its Tet cease-fire to four days as originally planned (Para. 6). Delegations from the Directorate and the Constituent Assembly continue to work out revisions of the constitution prior to assembly

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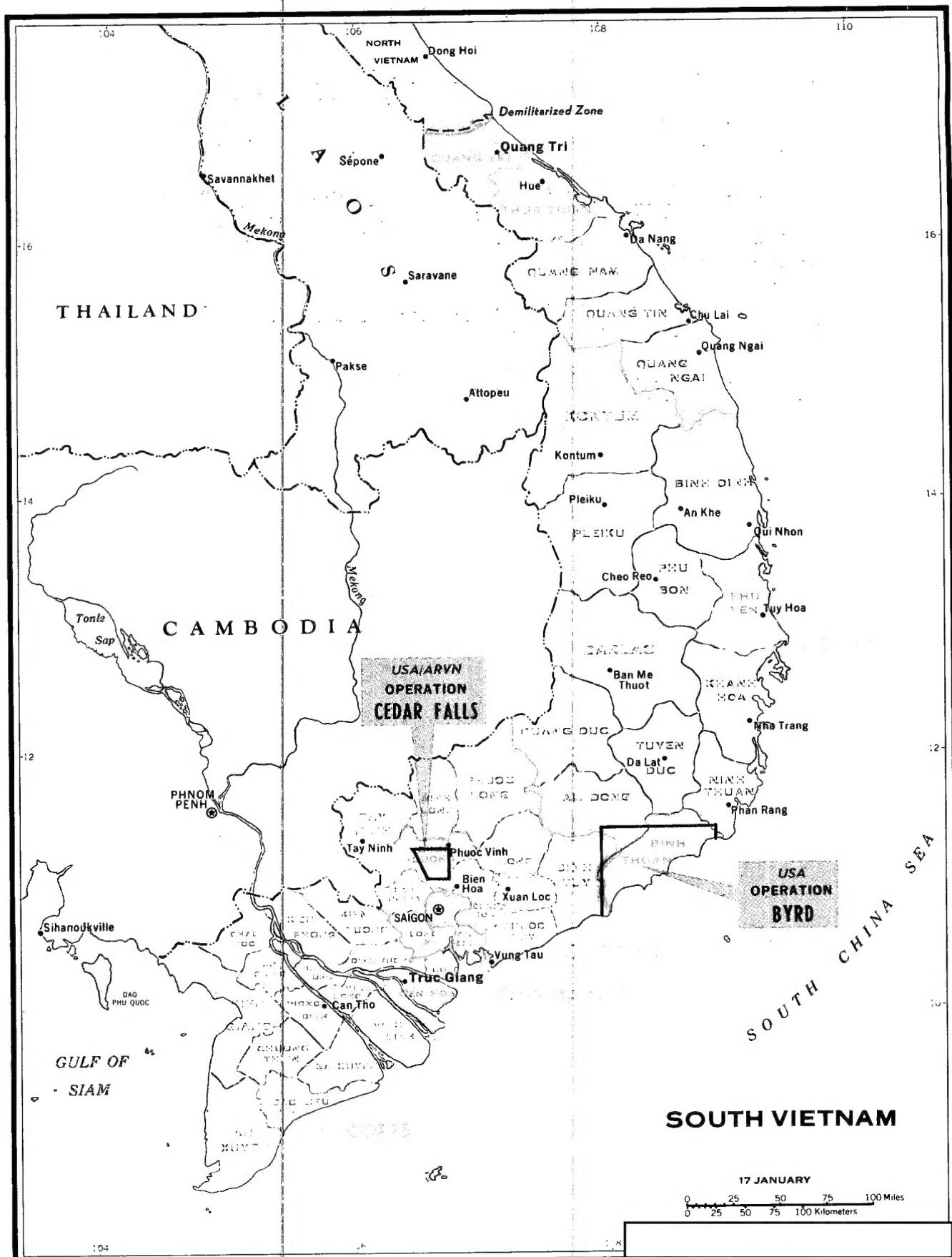
debate on 18 January (Paras. 7-8). The leader of FULRO has reportedly requested authorization to go into voluntary exile in some country other than South Vietnam or Cambodia (Paras. 9-10).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam:
Analysis of aerial photography [redacted] re-
veals 18 MIG-21 fighters at Phuc Yen Airfield
(Paras. 1-2).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There
is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The 25 allied battalions now participating in Operation CEDAR FALLS are continuing systematically to devastate the jungled Iron Triangle area of Binh Duong Province which has long served as a Viet Cong stronghold. Although no significant engagements have been reported recently, the number of Communist casualties continues to rise, and 466 enemy soldiers have been reported killed since this huge sweep operation began on 7 January. In addition, the allies have captured 73 Viet Cong, nearly 3,000 tons of rice, and more than 45,000 rounds of ammunition. American casualties thus far are 48 killed and 246 wounded.

2. Two small unit engagements were reported on 16 January in Operation BYRD which is being conducted in Binh Thuan Province about 110 miles northeast of Saigon. Elements of the US 1st Air Cavalry Division killed 15 Viet Cong and captured three more, while losing only five wounded. Since this search-and-destroy operation began on 25 August, 315 enemy troops have been killed and 140 captured. American casualties have been light, with just eight killed and 37 wounded in this one-battalion operation.

3. An updated report on the Communist assault of 15 January on an ARVN district headquarters seven miles north of Quang Tri city in northernmost Quang Tri Province indicates the number of casualties was higher than originally reported. During the initial attack and the following counteraction, 46 South Vietnamese (including the district chief) were killed, 44 wounded, and 37 missing. Eighty-eight weapons were also lost. Enemy losses were reported as 47 killed, three captured, and 23 weapons captured.

4. A Viet Cong unit of undetermined size attacked the South Vietnamese 32nd Ranger Battalion early on 17 January about eight miles east of Truc Giang in the Mekong Delta province of Kien Hoa. Seven rangers were killed and 44 wounded in the clash. Fifty-seven Communists were reported killed.

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A Captured Viet Cong Major Comments on Effects of B-52 Raids

5. The highest ranking Viet Cong captured to date in Operation CEDAR FALLS is a major, who claims to have been the executive officer of J-13 regiment, subordinate to Group 83, the rear service unit of the Viet Cong Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN). The major stated that a B-52 raid on his unit on 8 January 1967 killed 200, and destroyed 3,000 tons of rice and 30 tons of medical supplies. The prisoner stated that the commander of J-13 was absent without leave at the time, and that, subsequent to the raid, the surviving members of the regiment scattered. According to a document captured in the same area as the prisoner, a B-52 raid in December 1966 destroyed numerous underground tunnels of the Group 83 headquarters.

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Viet Cong Difficulties Revealed in Captured Documents

7. Recently captured Viet Cong documents reveal that the Communists in Thua Thien and Phu Yen provinces are having difficulties regarding the quality of their military and support personnel, as well as logistics and health problems.

8. A document, captured recently in Thua Thien but undated and unsigned, contains an evaluation of weaknesses shown by 45 members of the Phong Dien District

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local force company following a four-day orientation course. Seventy percent of the 45 troops lacked a sense of responsibility, 80 percent showed fear of being killed, 20 percent were undisciplined and "liked to act freely," and 17 percent carried out assignments poorly.

9. A document from Phu Yen, dated 14 October 1966, revealed that, in some areas of the province, Youth Assault Groups engaged in logistics duties had become completely inactive because they lacked enthusiasm and balked at hardships. The document called for various measures to correct this situation, including stepped-up recruitment of youths from Viet Cong-controlled areas, improved indoctrination, and active opposition to government conscription and the Chieu Hoi program.

10. Earlier captured documents and other reports have provided indications of factors contributing to the poor Viet Cong motivation in Phu Yen. Allied operations in the province, one document complained in June, had succeeded in enlarging areas under government control. A second document, dating from February 1966, spoke of rice shortages resulting from allied operations. It revealed that troops of the 5th NVA Division were being limited to 500 grams of rice on noncombat days and 625 grams on combat days, as compared with the standard ration of 700 to 750 grams daily for Viet Cong combat troops. Food shortages have also affected the local populace in Viet Cong areas, causing a number of people to flee to government-controlled areas and reducing the pool of potential Communist recruits.

11. Other documents from Phu Yen reveal that, since at least late 1965, there has been a shortage of medicines and medical equipment in Viet Cong units, apparently because transportation difficulties have limited shipments of supplies from North Vietnam. Several documents from Phu Yen--and elsewhere in II Corps--have cited inadequate hygienic measures in administering injections. According to such documents, as a result of improper methods of sterilization and spoiled vaccines, large numbers of patients have suffered abscesses, some for periods of up to six months.

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12. There is at least fragmentary evidence that similar difficulties are being experienced by the Viet Cong in other areas. Among documents captured recently in Viet Cong Military Region I (formerly called Military Region VII) are two medical reports from an unidentified unit concerning health problems in the second half of 1966. These reports show that, although incidences of fever had decreased by four percent and flu by ten percent, Viet Cong troops still suffered from malaria, dysentery, and other illnesses. The number of days each soldier in the unit was off duty during the year because of illness averaged 90.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Premier Ky has departed for his eight-day good-will tour of Australia and New Zealand and is expected to arrive in Canberra at mid-day (Canberra-time) on 18 January. In both countries to be visited, elaborate security measures are being taken in an attempt to prevent possible violence.

2. In Australia, Ky plans a five-day tour of principal cities, where he hopes to get maximum public exposure. Leftists and opponents of the Vietnam war are planning major demonstrations while Ky is in the country. Continuing the same line of strategy that it adopted during President Johnson's visit last October, the Communist Party of Australia is planning to encourage and capitalize on the demonstrations while officially remaining aloof.

3. Ky's trip to Australia has been the subject of bitter dispute since it was announced by the Holt government several weeks ago. Opposition Labour Party leader Arthur Calwell has volunteered to lead a massive, but nonviolent, demonstration against Ky, whom he labels, among other things, a "butcher" and "quisling gangster." Retaliatory responses by the South Vietnamese chargé in Canberra have added to the acrimony and led to demands for his recall by Calwell for interfering in Australia's internal politics.

4. Objections to Premier Ky's forthcoming trip to New Zealand have been more restrained and have been confined largely to the press and some labor elements. Demonstrations, however, are being planned by leftists and peace groups, but they are not expected to attain the dimensions and intensity of the Australian protests.

Vietnamese Press Censorship

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[Redacted]

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Saigon's newspapers have been heavily censored, especially in times of political turmoil. When General Nguyen Bao Tri took over the Ministry of Information in mid-1966, he made similar pledges of relaxed censorship practices, but they have been for the most part, unfulfilled.

Tet Cease-fire

6. In keeping with earlier remarks by Ky to the press, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 17 January officially restated the government's intention to hold a four-day cease-fire during the Vietnamese Lunar New Year (Tet), which begins on 8 February. In so doing, the GVN in effect refused to match a unilateral Viet Cong offer of a seven-day cease-fire, partly because previous holiday truces have been used by the Communists to infiltrate troops and supplies without interruption. The GVN communiqué, however, held out an offer for a longer suspension of the war, declaring that the Saigon government was prepared to meet with North Vietnamese representatives to work out the specifics.

FULRO Leader Requests Exile

7. Y Bham Enoul, the leader of the dissident tribal autonomy movement known by its acronym FULRO, has sent messages to the US Mission requesting his voluntary exile to a friendly Southeast Asian country, preferably Thailand. Y Bham is reported to be in Cambodia just across the South Vietnamese border. Some of his montagnard followers have already been repatriated to the GVN as a result of a long series of negotiations. The second phase of the repatriation plan calls for the return of nearly 2,000 more FULRO followers, possibly in February.

8. Y Bham apparently gave no reason for wishing exile instead of returning to South Vietnam with his followers. His basic distrust of the ethnic Vietnamese

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who administer the central highlands is, however, probably at the core of the request.

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Constitution Deliberations

9. The Constituent Assembly is scheduled to start debating the draft articles of the constitution on 18 January. In the meantime, delegations from the assembly and the Directorate are continuing to make changes in the document before it is debated by the full assembly. It appears that the assembly delegation is not averse so far to a number of substantive alterations suggested by the Directorate.

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[redacted] the joint meetings will continue after each assembly session in hopes that objections raised by the Directorate can be resolved as each article is debated.

10. During the joint meeting on the 17th, the assembly delegation agreed to the need for several changes proposed by the delegation from the Directorate. The assembly delegation hopes to sell the revisions to the assembly as a whole.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Confirmed photointerpretation of aerial photography [redacted] reveals 18 MIG-21 Fishbed fighters at Phuc Yen Airfield near Hanoi; ten aircraft in normal parking positions, three on a taxiway and five in a nearby dispersal area.
2. US estimates had credited the North Vietnamese Air Force with only six MIG-21s remaining after nine were shot down by US planes during the first week of January 1967. There is no indication of when these MIG-21s arrived in North Vietnam.

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